

From: Melissa Enderle
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As an educator who has worked with disadvantaged children, I would like to offer my feedback on the Microsoft Settlement. I taught in schools that had a 97% free lunch rate, with about an equal percentage of minority children. Even though the need and desire was demonstrated, the school could not afford to place computers in every classroom. Those computers in the school were outdated and needed maintenance. While some of Microsoft's proposed offer would benefit a few schools, it does nothing to address the real issue.

It has been determined that Microsoft had a monopoly that included unfair practices. Apple is one company that has been hurt. Many smaller software companies that create education software have also been adversely affected. How is placing computers in classrooms with lots of Microsoft products going to help those other software companies? How is this a punishment for Microsoft? What about all the consumers who paid way too much for software, including the buggy operating system? Microsoft mentioned that it would allow for other platform computers to be placed in the particular classrooms, but that those schools that chose the Windows operating system would get more software. That isn't free choice! Cash-strapped schools would logically choose the package deal with more software.

If Microsoft would simply offer money in the way of technology to schools (including funds for teacher inservice on integrating technology into the classroom), then perhaps the settlement proposal would be palatable. I would also like to see people who purchased software get a refund, some sort of fine, and carefully monitor future pricing to ensure that Microsoft doesn't pull the same thing again. Microsoft needs to receive more than a slap on the hand to change its practices.

Quality is often inspired by competition. Microsoft's monopolistic practices have ensured that this cannot occur. I sincerely hope that the justice system will prevail and accept only judgments that are based on fair practice, and not be influenced by the money/power of companies.